

# AN EPISTLE

To the whole

## Flock of God,

To be read in their *ASSEMBLIES*, or  
else where.

*Let this be dispersed only among Friends.*

**D**EAR Friends, and Lambs of my heavenly Father's fold of Rest & Peace, my Heart is full of love towards you, desiring your preservation in the heavenly blessed way of our God, which is very strait and narrow, so that too few find it, for indeed none can rightly find it, but as they come to know a Death to their own wisdom, willings and runnings, which ever was an Enemy to the precious Life and leadings of God's Spirit, therefore dear Friends take heed of the Tree of knowledge, so as to feed upon it, for if there be a feeding upon it, it will bring Death over the precious Life, and so the understanding will be darkened, although the

fession of Truth may be retained, yet the Life which makes truly sensible may be wanting: So dear Friends, take heed of that wisdom which is below, and yet would be Judge over the Life & leadings of Gods pure Spirit, which alwayes leads in the Cross to our own wills; Oh the harm that this earthly Wisdom and aspiring mind hath done to many in all Ages! Surely the People were in this Wisdom when they built the Tower of *Babel*, thinking thereby to reach Heaven, and to get themselves a Name, but the Lord confounded their Languages; and how are the Languages of the *Babel*-builders confounded in this day, so that they cannot agree together in their Imaginations? But one saith, this is the way, and another saith, that is the way; one saith, my judgment is so, and another saith, mine is thus, it may be, quite contrary to the others; oh my Friends, is not this aspiring mind and earthly Wisdom the ground of Strife and Contentions about the things of God; or mind of his Spirit, which no man by this Wisdom can ever know; that is my Testimony for God, which will stand over all that shall oppose it: Therefore dear Friends wait to know the true Baptism, for many have believed, but too few are Baptized into the Death of carnal reason, and that part which would save self alive; oh Friends, the true Baptism is a weighty thing to witness; for where this is truly known, self is made of no Reputation, mans wit and wisdom, reason and consultation about the matters of Gods Kingdom are laid aside, and the Lord alone is waited for to guide, who by his blessed everlasting Life leadeth in the narrow way to Life, where the blessed Worship, that is in the pure Spirit,

is known: Oh dear Friends and Sheep of my heavenly Father's fold, feel me here, for it is a great weight upon my Spirit, that all those that profess the Truth, may rightly know the Worship which is in the Spirit of Truth, that so the answer of true Peace they may feel returned into their Bosoms, not a self-conceited Peace, which men may create to themselves upon their doing this or that, *Pharisee-like*; my Friends there is much difference betwixt the Peace that God gives, & the Peace which some professing Truth may make to themselves in their own earthly Wisdom, in paying of *Tythes*, and in saying *Ro* to a single person, with several other things, which many of the dear Children of God durst not, nor yet dare not do, although they should dye for it; but this is my Testimony, with many of my ancient Brethren and Sisters, who have kept their integrity, whom God in his everlasting love sent first amongst us to publish his everlasting Truth, that, that Peace is not from God, nor that liberty that which is in the right Spirit, in which the Saints were to stand fast; but it is the liberty which is in the Flesh, which is to be judged and stood over in the Power and Authority of God, both in the particular and in the general; that liberty which is in the true Spirit, in which the Saints of old were to stand fast, is to feel the Seed at Liberty, wherein the Heart is enlarged to praise the Lord in the true Humility, brokenness, and contritedness of Spirit, where Hallelujahs are sung unto the Lord, to whom be Glory for evermore, faith my Soul. And Friends, what is the Worship which is in the Spirit? Is it not to have all self-Will and self-Wisdom, and all that is contrary to God in-

wardly brought into subjection unto it? every high thought, and every vain Imagination laid low, all in subjection to the Seed, then there is an inward bowing the Knee to the Name of Jesus, and the Seed comes to Reign in every Heart thus subjected; and in this the heavenly holy Family-order comes to be known, when the holy Child Jesus comes to Reign in every Heart, then the travelling Babe will be nourished, and Iniquity, and oppression born Testimony against in every place, then Judgment will not be altogether according to the sight of the Eye, or outward appearance, but there will be righteous Judgment from a sensible feeling of the ground of the matter, and there will be no watching for Evil, but here all will be done in true love; here will be no *Herod* watching for the Young Child's Life, but here we shall be Helpers and Strengtheners one of another in that which is good, and against every appearance of Evil; which will make us a People to Gods praise, being fellow-feelers of one anothers exercises, and Helpers to bear one anothers Burthens, then will the work of the Lord go easily on, when every ones Neck is under the Yolk, but when one draws one way, and another another way, then it goes heavily on: So dear Friends, all take heed of a secret inclination to Self, and of letting another do that for any of you, which you are ashamed to be seen to do your selves, for that is Deceit and will darken the understanding and blind the Eye, as *Balaam's* inclination after *Balak's* promotion did him, so that the dumb Ass could see the Angel before he could.

So dear Friends, all search your Hearts to the  
bottom

bottom with the blessed Light, which is given for that end, let none look overly over their own inward states & conditions, for the Enemy is very buſie to draw out the mind from that, which gives a true diſcerning, into a ſelf-conceitedneſs in a dry Profeſſion; & in this State the earthly ſenſual wiſdom would Reign over the ſimplicity and true Innocency and heavenly Seed, which ſhould Reign over all in the Heart; when the Righteous bear rule, there is true peace and felicity; but on the contrary, the Seed is burthened, and the honeſt Heart is grieved, and yet thoſe that live in the airy Wiſdom, above the witneſs, may not be ſenſible of it, no more then the Diſciples (who were heavy and careleſs) had of Chriſt, when he was in ſuch an Agony, that he ſweat as it were great drops of Blood, when he ſaid unto them, *Can ye not watch with me one Hour;* and at another time he ſaid, *that he had many things to ſay unto them, but (ſaid he) ye cannot bear them now:* And yet they had followed him long, and wrought Miracles in his Name; but he ſaid, *he would ſend the Spirit of Truth, and it ſhould lead them into all Truth:* (Mark) into all Truth; and he exhorted them to wait for it, which they did; and when they had more fully received it, then they could diſcern that which before they were ſtrangers unto: So dear Friends, it is very ſafe for every one to wait low in their minds, to feel that which gives a true diſcerning of the thoughts and intents of the Heart, and alſo the things concerning God's Kingdom, and of the well-being of our immortal Souls for evermore, Amen.

And Friends, there is another thing opens in my Heart.

Heart, that as the *Jew* outward was to go to outward *Jerusalem* to worship, the then appointed Place; so the *Jew* inward now is to know a gathering into the new and heavenly *Jerusalem*, which is come and coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband; all the true Worshipers must hither be gathered; let him that readeth understand, for it is a Mystery to all the Gazers abroad, who are worshipping in their Imaginations, and know not the place of true Worship, which is performed in the true Spirit, in the new and heavenly *Jerusalem*, which the Lord God is the Light of, and the Gates are not at all shut by Day, and there is no Night there, and yet the unclean cannot enter therein: But blessed be the Lord God of my Life, he hath made a little Remnant in their measures Citizens in this heavenly *Jerusalem*, who drink at the pure River of clear Water, which runs through the midst of this City, which hath the Tree of Life on each side of it, whose Leaves is for the healing of the Nations of their sinful desires; and the true Church, the Church of the first-born, is coming out of the Wilderness again after the dark Night of Apostacy, wherein the Whore, Beast & false Prophet hath born Rule, which makes the Heathen rage, and Priests angry, because their Dragon is falling, and their craft is going down, by which they have got their Wealth, which makes them cast so many into Prisons for their Bellies; but the Lord is risen and arising, more and more to plead the cause of the Innocent People: Therefore dear Friends be valiant for his Truth upon Earth, and let no man take your Crown from you by his subtilty;



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tilty; but trust in the Lord, who is strength to the weak, and the binder up of the broken-hearted, who is with his People in Prisons, neither bars nor bolts of Iron, nor all the Cruelty of man can keep his presence from them; and therefore every one wait to feel him in your own particulars, for our strength is to be known within us; the World's strength is in the Arm of Flesh, but ours in the name of the Lord, which is as a strong Tower, the Righteous flee unto it and are safe; *greater is he that is in us, then he that is in the world;* and Christ said unto his, *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;* in the world ye have trouble, but in me ye have Peace, such peace as the World cannot give nor take away; in which peace my Soul at this time is well satisfied, Glory to the Lord God of Heaven and Earth for evermore, who visiteth those that are in Prison for his Name-sake with everlasting love, in which love I rest.

Leicester County-Goal the }  
14th Day of the 10th }  
Moneth, 1676 }

Your Friend and Brother  
in Tribulation and Sa-  
viance.

John Willsford.

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THE END.